1: Cooper E-4 (no date) 1946 SH5 Tehuelche SH5

304 Prichard (1902, p. 92) states that children's heads were so bandaged as to produce [intentionally!] flattening of the back of the skull. Two types of cradle were used: a flat cradle, apparently of ladder type (Vignati, 1938 a, pp. 73–74), to which the infant was tied, and which could be swung from the roof of the toldo by means of thongs attached to its four corners; a curved wicker cradle (fig. 20) placed, with the child in it, on the horse's haunch behind the mother when she traveled horseback (cf. Vignati, 1938 a, for details). Parents were often known by the name of their child (Musters, 1871, p. 177).

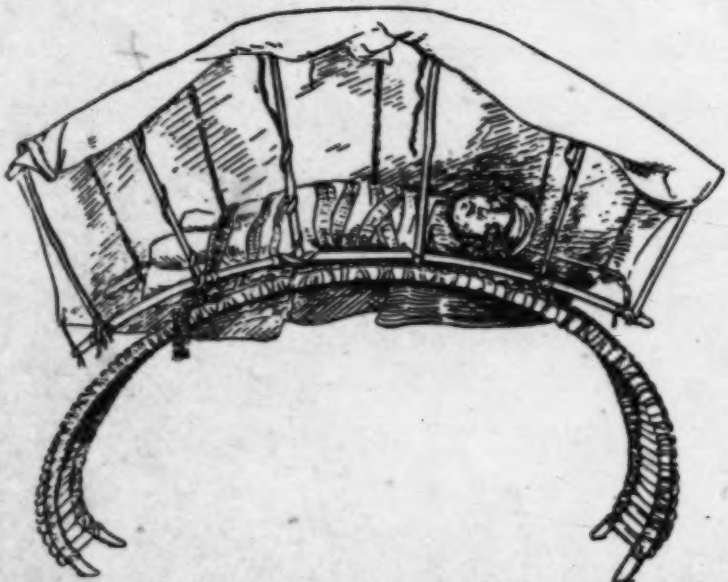

FIGURE 20.—Tehuelche child's cradle for use on horseback. (After de la Vaulx, 1901, p. 165.)

852 At the birth of a child, wealthy parents summoned the medicine man, who painted himself white and bled himself in the temple, forearm, or leg with a bodkin; a special tent, the "pretty house," was erected; mares were slaughtered and a feast held; toward evening, a fire was lighted in front of the pretty house, and to the accompaniment of drum and musical bow, the men, wearing ostrich plumes on their beads and a bell-studded strap from shoulder to thigh, danced four at a time (Musters, 1871, p. 176; 1872, pp. 199–200). A horse was killed at the eruption of a child's first teeth (Viedma, 1837 b, p. 78). If a child hurt itself playing, a "pretty house" was erected, mares were slaughtered, and a feast dance were held (Musters, 1872, pp. 201–202).

1: Cooper E-4 (no date) 1946 SH5 Tehuelche SH5

on the occasion
of sickness, the evil spirit was driven away by firing off guns and revolvers, by throwing lighted brands into the air, and by beating the backs of toldos with lance shafts or bolas (Musters, 1872, p. 203; Lista, 1879 b, p. 76).

SHAMANISM

There were both male and female shamans. Transvestite shamans were reported absent in the middle 18th century (Sañchez Labrador, 1936, p. 52), but appear later, in the early 19th (Coan, 1880, p. 158; D'Orbigny, 1835–47, 4: 220). The ordinary curing procedure included sounding of drum and calabash (Sánchez Labrador, 1936, p. 127) or hide rattle (Coan, 1880, p. 153), and sucking out some small material object as the cause of the disease. The modern shamaness described by Borgatello (1924, p. 128) used a hand-drum in her curing rites. If the patient died, the shaman was very apt to be killed by the bereaved relatives.

The arrow-swallowing trick, observed by the Magellan expedition in 1520 at Port San Julian (Pigafetta, 1906, 1: 58; Oviedo, 1851–55, 2: 10) and by the Sarmiento expedition in 1584 near Cape San Gregorio in the Strait of Magellan (Sarmiento, [1579], 1895 b, p. 320; cf. Hernandez, [1620], 1895, p. 358), but not reported by any later observers, may have been from a shamanistic repertoire, although Pigafetta considered it a remedy for pain in the stomach. The performer, after removing the arrowhead, stuck the shaft down his throat to his stomach, and then withdrew it.

MYTHOLOGY

Our data on *Tehuelche* mythology and folklore are extremely meager. In the very brief cosmogonic note given us by Musters (1871, p. 179), the good spirit created the Indians and animals, and dispersed them from a place called "God's-hill." In Borgatello's account (1924, pp. 129–130), Heller, son of the sun, who also was called by this name, was the one who created the *Tehuelche* and gave them their land of Patagonia, and it is to Heller that the *Tehuelche* go after death. In the short Heller cycle, as reported by Borgatello, occur the Achilles and the magic flight motifs. Lista (1879 b, pp. 75–76) reported a *Tehuelche* flood story.

LORE AND LEARNING

No weights or measures are reported. Smoke signaling was much used; Borgatello (1924, p. 19) lists four distinct conventional signals. According to Sánchez Labrador (1936, p. 56), it seems that the *Tehuelche* and *Puelche*, in contrast to the *Araucanians*, did not use herbal curatives, but in the 19th century the *Tehuelche* made some use of them. (Fitz-Roy, 1839, 2: 155; Musters, 1871, pp. 181, 183;

1: Cooper E-4 (no date) 1946 SH5 Tehuelche

Indians [of the Pampa] believe in two superior beings, the one good, the other evil." Soychu (see supra, p. 157) may have been a *Puelche* name for the deity or one of the deities (cf. Falkner, 1774, p. 114); Gualichu may also be a word of *Puelche* origin; Lehmann-Nitsche (1922, pp. 28, 33) considered that both words were from his *Het* tongue; but the point is quite uncertain. With the meager evidence we have, all that one can do is to present the foregoing facts and let the reader draw his own conclusions.

At full moon, there was excessive rejoicing, and the moon was asked for strength (Sánchez Labrador, 1936, pp. 65–66).

SHAMANISM

Here, too, it is impossible to say in how far as a rule the generalized statements in Sánchez Labrador and Falkner apply to the *Puelche*. Sánchez Labrador, however, does specifically (1936, p. 52) ascribe transvestite shamans to the *Puelche*—men who dressed like women, cooked and fetched water, and stayed with the women. Shamans were very much feared. They were called, according to D'Orbigny (1835–47, 2:270), calmelache (a name very similar to the name camalasque, which Viedma [erroneously?] attributes to the evil spirit of the *Tehuelche;* see supra, p. 158).

MYTHOLOGY

Available data are excessively meager. Sun was the elder brother, Moon the younger brother; Moon was not so intelligent as Sun (Lehmann-Nitsche, 1919 a). There was a tradition of a very high tide (Lehmann-Nitsche, 1919 b) and also of a flood. After the flood which covered all the earth except the Sierra de la Ventana, the peoples came out of caves in the mountains and the world was populated again (Sánchez Labrador, 1936, p. 66; cf. Vignati, 1938 b).

LORE AND LEARNING

Sánchez Labrador (1936, p. 56) rather clearly implies that the *Puelche* used no herbal curatives. One can count up to 100,000 in the *Puelche* language, but all numbers from 99 up, including, of course "100" and "1,000," are from *Quechua.*

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For bibliographic references, see pages 138–139.

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

512 party, interchange of visits and card parties with the recent arrivals, fishing, foraging for birds' eggs, spinach, &c., with some flirting, and, by way of business, a parlemento or two, made our time pass merrily enough at Henno.

888 Our hunting parties were under the direction of 'the oldest inhabitant,' an aged cacique called Guenalto, with venerable white hair, and who had been crippled by a lance-thrust, received to his honour be it said, while endeavouring to mediate between two of his friends. His great age and amiable character commanded universal respect; and on a hunting morning he would sit under a bush and speechify [537] for half an hour, recounting old deeds of prowess, and exhorting us to do our best. The old man was a frequent and welcome visitor at our toldo, where he was encouraged to indulge to his heart's content in long-winded stories. My 755 compass greatly excited his curiosity, and he took it into his head that it possessed a magical power which could effect the restoration of the use of his arm. He accordingly begged to be allowed to hold it in his hand; and sat patiently, with an air of awe and faith combined, for an hour, afterwards declaring that the operation had done him much good. We 714 greatly pleased him by repairing his coat of mail, a complete tunic of heavy iron chains, of unknown antiquity, bound together by strips of hide, and weighing over a hundredweight. This he informed me he only put on to defend himself from 'foolish Indians.'

777 His use of my compass was rivalled by the custom of other friends, who were wont to borrow it when engaged in a game of cards; their belief being that the magic instrument gave luck to the happy possessor for the time being; and I often thought that it was fortunate I had brought no other instrument, as 'shooting the sun' would have been certainly regarded as a piece of sorcery, and any death or accident happening afterwards would have been visited on the head of the magician. As it was, my taking notes was 203 often regarded with suspicious curiosity, and inquiries made

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

drunken brawl since our departure, and that a rumour was current that the Valdivians had had their cattle taken from them, and various other stories, most of which were declared to be lies by Orkeke, who, having lost a horse, had returned to look for it in Geylum; the budget of alarming news thus proving to be a fresh illustration of the Indian's proneness to invent if they have nothing of real importance wherewith to astonish their hearers. Crimè's widow took up her abode in our toldo; and as, by this chief's death, the post of capitanejo, with the rank of lieutenant in the Buenos Ayrean army, and the right of drawing rations, was vacant, Casimiro consulted me as to his successor. But successive proposals of those who seemed most fit, beginning with Wáki, were objected to by the cacique, who at last declared that he should name his almost insane son Graviel as the chief to be placed by the Argentine Government upon the list of the caciques to be conciliated by annual pay! On April 22 a start was made, but we remained to the last, as four of Casimiro's horses which I had brought down to the valley the previous evening were missing, so the chieftain returned to look for them, and the rest of the toldo pursued their journey.

After taking a farewell look at the Cordillera, which was presently shut out from view by the hills, the counterslope of which we descended, a hurried march led us through a very barren rocky country entangled in broken irregular hills, with scarcely a bush to shelter under, and little or no pasture. We encamped, or rather reached the camp after it was pitched, in a cañon containing a small spring and a very little green pasture, and went to bed supperless, as, not being in time for the hunt, and game being very scarce, what we could beg from our neighbours was naturally given to those recovering from sickness.

Jackechan's wife and child were still very unwell, and, as the child was supposed to be dying, the doctor was sent for. He proceeded to cure it by laying it on the ground, muttering a charm and patting it on the head; after which he put

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

●755 his mouth close to its chest and shouted to bring the devil out: he then turned it on its face and repeated the same process. The child's health mended next day, and it was shortly out of danger.

224 About ten o'clock at night Casimiro returned with his horses, which had strayed a considerable distance on the road back to Geylum. The next day a long march of twenty miles brought us to an encampment on the western verge of a broad plain, watered by a brooklet. During the [136] hunt the first Patagonian hares, or cavies, were caught. These little animals live in burrows, but are generally out feeding or sleeping in the grass during the day. They are excessively swift for perhaps a mile, but, like the foxes of this country soon get tired. The chase of these small deer afforded an agreeable relief to the monotony of the journey. As soon as we entered a plain or valley where they abounded, as they always were found in numbers where the pasture was good, all hurried off to 'stop the earths,' *i.e.*, close up the burrows with bushes; but the cunning little beasts often evaded us by slipping into a burrow overlooked by the earth, stoppers. It required considerable skill to bring them down with the bolas, as, if only caught round the legs or body, they disentangled themselves quickly, but a blow on the head proved at once fatal. They are good eating, though the flesh [262 281] is somewhat dry when roasted. Their skins are made up into mantles, but are of little value, as the hair soon comes off.

133 About a mile below the encampment, where the sandy plain narrowed and sloped down to a low-lying grassy valley, a singular phenomenon presented itself. The morning after our arrival, when going out to look for the horses, a furious easterly gale whirled the dust aloft in dense clouds, and, to my great surprise, the sand, which was driven into our faces, was as hot as when the fire so nearly encircled us. Almost blinded in forcing our way through this curtain of driving sand, we rode right into a hollow, where the earth appeared to be on fire; as the horses plunged

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

in consequence of which a quantity of mares and horses were slaughtered, and numbers of ponchos, ornaments, and other property burnt by the parents in their grief. It was most distressing to see and hear the melancholy manifestations of sorrow, and the sound alone of that dreadful crying aloud, and the dismal 'ullagoning,' to use the Irish expression, of the old women, haunted me even in my sleep. The night of our arrival a mock combat with the Gualichu took place, in which everybody joined. After dark, when many were sitting by the firesides conversing, and I myself was reclining on my bed smoking, the doctor came into the toldo, and communicated with the chief, who told all to get their arms ready, and loaded his gun: on a shout being set up all fires were immediately extinguished, and all commenced firing off guns, clashing their swords, and beating the backs of the toldos, and yelling 'kow-w!' at each blow; firebrands being, at the same time, thrown into the air by the women, with clamorous shouts and cries. The scene was wild and striking, the darkness of the night being only illuminated by the flashes of the guns or the sparks from the brands whirled high into the air. At a given signal all stopped simultaneously, and for two or three minutes the camp remained in perfect darkness, after which the fires were relighted, and things resumed their ordinary aspect.

The following day, strange to say, a real fight took place, in which one man was wounded, and for a few minutes a general *mêlée* or free fight appeared imminent. Parties were already forming to cancel old blood feuds, when further mischief was checked by the return of Hinchel, myself, and others. We had been absent trying new horses on the race-course, which, as in almost all the camping-grounds since leaving the Rio Sengel, was a regular beaten level track of about a couple of miles in length, and my new horse had established his fame as a racer by winning a match over a distance of a mile and a half; meanwhile the quarrel broke out—such are the uncertainties of Indian life.

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

He narrated how he himself had occupied twelve days in crossing it, and had been obliged to abandon a horse and the saddle and gear of his remaining steed, and with difficulty, nearly starved, on foot, and driving his almost worn-out horse before him, had made his way to a station.

At the same time a young Indian started to cross the desert, but lost his way, and, quoth the cacique impressively, 'His bones are there now.'

One statement, that the chañals or white thorns grew higher than the horses' heads and tore the unlucky riders' mantles to pieces as they forced their way through them, my own after-experience fully verified. I, however, adhered firmly to my original intention of going, as agreed to by him, and conveying with my own hand the letter I had written: and it was finally settled that Meña, Nacho, and I should, on arriving at Margensho, start on our journey as chasquis. Casimiro's real motive for dissuading me was distrust, as we had on two or three occasions disagreed, and once nearly come to blows; he was therefore afraid that I should, on arriving at Patagones, work against his interests and give him a bad character. Meña, who had taken a great fancy to me, volunteered for the purpose of keeping an eye on Nacho, who was my 'bête noire,' and not to be trusted.

These arrangements having been brought to a satisfactory conclusion, we proceeded to the toldo of a friend and assisted at the ceremony performed by the doctor of curing a sick child, more especially concerning the part of painting with red ochre, killing and eating a white mare.

On this occasion the parents formally invited the principal chiefs and their relations and friends, and the ceremony commenced as follows. All the men were either sitting or standing in a circle, in the centre of which sat the mother holding her infant in her arms. The doctor then came in, and under his direction the mother plastered the infant from head to foot with white clay, the wizard meanwhile mutter-

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

ing incantations; when this was completed, the doctor 755
disappeared for a minute or two, returning with an ornamented hide bag in his hand; this he opened, and produced from the bottom some charms carefully enveloped in rags, which he, after performing some mystic hocus-pocus, returned to the bag. He next took the baby from the mother, and patting it gently on the head, and muttering in a low tone, dipped its head into the bag two or three times, and then returned it to its mother. A white mare was brought up, and, after being daubed all over with hand-marks of red ochre, was knocked on the head, cooked, and eaten on the spot, the heart, liver, and lungs being hung on a lance, to the top of which was suspended the bag containing the charms. Care was taken, as in other ceremonies, that no dogs approached to eat the offal, which was buried, the head and backbone being removed to a neighbouring hill.

On the 9th of May we started, arriving the same evening 133
at Margensho, which was, as the Indians had previously described it to me, a large grassy plain lying below a step or barranca, and watered by a brook running N.E. and S.W. During the hunt over the previously described plains there was nothing remarkable except the extreme scarcity of game, skunks alone being numerous; fortunately I killed a male guanaco, and as I had the previous day corrected my page he brought up the horses most carefully, so that all was in readiness for an early start. Before sundown the chiefs 622
were collected, and the contents of the letter read to them; they all appeared pleased, and after adding a postscript setting forth the names and number of the chiefs who required rations I closed the correspondence.

Hinchel came and provided me with tobacco, asking as a favour that if any of his friends in the settlement should inquire if he got drunk when occasion offered in the pampas, I would bear witness to his sobriety; he also entreated that I would either return to the Indians or remain in Patagones until he arrived, which latter I promised to do.

[Letter to be delivered to the Argentine authorities -- Analyst]

3: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1872
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

[782] house erected, and a feast and dance takes place. If a child falls
755 ill, the doctor is sent for, and if he says it will live, great rejoicing and a feast take place. The doctors, although they depend chiefly on incantations and magic to perform their cures, must have some other knowledge, which they keep to themselves, as I have known them perform two or three cures when the sick people appeared to be rapidly sinking. I will cite one instance of their treatment which came under my particular notice. The patient, a child of about a year and a half old, was very ill with influenza, and we all thought it would die. The doctor arrived in the toldo, and laying the child on its back, proceeded, after patting it lightly on the head, and murmuring an incantation, to place his mouth close to the patient's chest, and shout, as far as I could understand, to exhort the evil spirit to leave the child; after this he took it up, carefully handed it to its mother, who under his directions, smeared it all over with gypsum. This over, it was handed back to the doctor, who had been absent a minute. He then produced a hide bag, at the bottom of which were some charms; into this he inserted the baby's head several times, muttering incantations; after this a white mare was brought up, and after being painted with red ochre hand-marks all over, was knocked on the head, cooked, and eaten, care being taken, as before, that no dogs approached. The liver, heart, and lungs were hung on a lance, at the top of which was suspended the bag containing the charms. Whatever effect these ceremonies may have had, the child recovered. On the death of a
766 child great anguish is displayed by the parents. The horse it has been accustomed to travel on on the march, is brought up, the gear placed on it, even to the cradle, and the horse, when fully caparisoned, strangled by means of lazos, the saddle gear, cradle, and all appertaining to the child burnt, the women crying and singing; the parents, moreover, throw their own valuables into the fire to notify their grief. These things some of the women who cry are allowed to snatch out as a recompense for their services; however, they seldom benefit much.

776 I have now described most of the principal ceremonies observed amongst these Indians, but have not touched on their religion in any way. They believe in a good spirit gifted with much power, who made the Indians first, and also the animals necessary for their maintenance, which he dispersed from a hill visited by us in our wanderings, situated about lat. 47 degs. south, long. about 71 degs. 40 mins. west. This great spirit, however, according to their ideas, takes but little trouble as to their welfare; consequently most of their religious ceremonies are for the purpose of propitiating the evil spirits, which are several. The chief devil, however, who rejoices in the name of "Gualy-

3: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1872
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

chu", is supposed continually to lurk outside and at the back of the toldo, watching for an opportunity to do harm to the inhabitants, and is only prevented from causing continual annoyance by the spells of the doctors, which latter are not only supposed to be gifted with the power of laying the devil, but also affirm that they can see him. On an occasion of sickness it is a common custom with these and other Indians to try and drive away the evil spirit by firing off guns and revolvers, throwing lighted brands into the air, and beating the backs of the toldos with lance shafts or bolas. Besides this particular household devil, if I may be allowed the expression, there are many others who live in caverns under particular rocks and rivers; these are supposed to be the spirits of departed members of the medical profession. Their power was, as far as I could ascertain, confined to the districts contiguous to their habitations.

These Indians have also a custom of saluting the new moon, patting their heads and murmuring an incantation. They also salute in the same manner the spirits of the rocks and rivers. I at first was of opinion that they merely saluted these objects as specimens of the Creator's handiwork, but at last was inclined to think that their devotions were directed to propitiate the tutelary demons presiding over them. They have many signs and omens; one peculiar one is the cry of the night-jar, which, if uttered over a camp or toldo, betokens sickness to some of the inmates. They also object strongly to this bird being injured in any way. Another animal looked upon as having powers of witchcraft is a flat, toad-like lizard, common on the slopes of the Cordillera. Its power is confined chiefly to laming horses, and it is killed whenever met with. When about to smoke, the Indians invariably puff a portion to each cardinal point, muttering an incantation; they then lie prone on the ground, and inhale several puffs, which produces a state of torpor or insensibility, lasting perhaps one or two minutes, when they take a drink of water and recover their senses. Sometimes the intoxication is accompanied with convulsions. This intoxication is not confined to the Indians, I myself having frequently, after inhaling tobacco smoke, experienced the same results.

The position of wizard or doctor is not a very desirable one, as in the event of his prognosticating a success in a war expedition, or cessation in sickness, or any other event which is not realised, the chief will not unfrequently have him killed. Wizards are chosen *not* by hereditary descent, but by peculiarities exhibited in their youth. Women are allowed to become doctors, but such are rare. Witchcraft, however, is not confined to these wizards, and sometimes a dying man will state that so and so has caused his death by magic, in which case the person accused,

5: Bourne T-5 (1849)1874
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

take up his challenge, he would go on croaking the same things with tedious iteration. After listening very patiently to one of his harangues, I inwardly applauded the taste of his subjects in getting as far as possible out of the reach of his voice.

One forenoon, as I was beginning to feel impatient to move, — for every movement seemed to fan the flickering hope that we would soon reach a place affording some avenue of escape, and this restlessness always made camp-life doubly dismal, — the chief informed me that we should decamp that day. Preparations had commenced, when one of his daughters came in with a child crying at a tempestuous rate. The version which she gave of his complaints arrested the marching orders. A messenger was forthwith despatched for one skilled in the healing art. The physician soon arrived, armed with two small packages rolled up in pieces of skin, about a foot long and three or four inches in diameter, which I took to be his medicine-chest. He walked gravely in, laid down the packages, and squatted beside the mother, who held the little patient in her arms. Whatever his ailment might have been, his lungs could not have been impaired, for he was roaring like a young buffalo. Not a word was spoken for some time. the doctor all the while looking him very steadily in the eye. Then came a sudden calm, importing that the little fellow experienced some relief, or, more probably, that he was exhausted. The doctor ordered an application, — not of hot water, according to the prescription of Sangrado, but of a mortar made of clay. The clay was brought, the anxious mother worked it over with her two hands, spitting upon it to give it the requisite moisture, and having re-

5: Bourne T-5 (1849) 1874
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

•755 duced it to the consistency of thick paint, bedaubed the little fellow from head to foot, giving him a decidedly original appearance. He evidently took umbrage at this unction, and discoursed in his shrillest tones till he was fairly out of breath. The medicine-chests were opened, but, instead of medicinal herbs, disclosed only a bunch of ostrich's sinews and a rattle eight or ten inches long. The physician commenced fingering the strings, and muttering almost inaudibly. This lasted four or five minutes, at the expiration of which he seized his rattle, and clattered away furiously for a minute or two, and resumed his place by his patient, eying him intently as before. He then turned with an air of importance to the chief, who had been crouching cross-legged on his couch. leaning forward. with his arms tightly folded on his breast, and watching anxiously the progress of the treatment. The man of skill broke silence: "I think he is better; don't you?" The chief nodded, and grunted assent. The same appeal was made to the mother, and received a like response. Another plastering was ordered, another burst of melody followed the application, the mysterious strings were again fingered, duly followed by the rattle. The parent and grandparent once more assented to the leech that the child was better. The chief took out a piece of tobacco, and cut off enough for about two pipefuls, which was tendered and gratefully accepted as a professional fee. The strings were tied up and replaced in their proper receptacle, and the rattle was shaken with hearty good will, whether by way of finale to the cure, or as a note of gratitude for the fee, or of triumph for success, could not easily be guessed. But the practitioner had scarcely evacuated the lodge, before his patient

5: Bourne T-5 (1849)1874
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

broke out more vociferously than ever; which I thought would somewhat shake the faith of his guardians in the treatment he had received. But no; their confidence in their medical adviser was not to be blown away by a breath, or even a tempest. They evidently regarded him as nearly infallible. His remedies were obviously aimed more at the imaginations of his spectators than at the body of his patient, but it was no concern of mine. Patients among us have to endure more disagreeable applications than wet clay. The noisy brat became quiet, to our great relief. He shortly appeared to be quite well, and continued to thrive for some time, as I had opportunity to witness.

The tribe went ahead with alacrity, to make up for the loss of time this sickness occasioned. We moved off another day's journey towards nowhere in particular, and settled there at night. Then ensued another season of camp life, feasting and fasting, gambling and quarrelling, and venting superfluous wrath in an abundance of "Casharan caskaly's." The chief was slightly indisposed, and I amused him with a description of the manner in which our physicians count the pulse of their patients. He listened with considerable interest, and sat thoughtfully ruminating on the matter. He came to an unexpected and alarming conclusion; putting this and my story of the *opodeldoc* together, he made up his mind that I was a physician myself! I protested against this inference, fearing that no good would come of the responsibilities he was inclined to impose on me. But the disclaimer was useless, — he stuck to the opinion; and in no long time it was understood through all the tribe that I was a distinguished doctor.

able, and it is never uncovered for anyone unless by order of the pseudo holy man or witch doctor, who may be either a man or a woman. This person ordinarily has to practice his art daily, chanting to the deity to the accompaniment of two gourds filled with pebbles -- a type of music which is as unpleasant as is his own voice. In this manner the witch doctor makes petitions to the deity to the effect that the group's enemies may sicken or die. This often redounds in the witch doctor's undoing for should his incantations be followed by some plague among the enemy, or some chief or important person die amongst them, then the enemy group will try every means to capture the witch doctor and make a devil's martyr of him. The witch doctors must also chant to the deity in intercession for the sick in their own camp in order to overrule the witch doctors among their enemies. If the sick person is not brought back to health the sick one's friends often will give the witch doctor his just deserts, at least by depriving him of his occupation and treating him as of no repute in the future; if the wife or son of a chief should die the witch doctor will often pay for his unsuccessful cure with his life. The witch doctor's curative efforts are limited to chanting, no other medicines being used in the curing of sickness. And so these singing doctors encounter many hardships in their lives, there being but few who die of natural causes, but nevertheless there are always many eager for the job because they can have a free hand with the Indians' wives if the latter are willing, or, if the witch doctor be a woman, she can have relations with the men. There are almost as many witch doctors as there are families because as a rule the head of every household has an idol of his own in his tent, and if the camp is made up of four, five or more families, there are an equal number of witch doctors or pseudo holy men -- let it be remembered that amongst the Indians a family is not composed only of man, wife and children, but also of all of the relatives of the husband who is the family head, and who is therefore a sort of subaltern chief under the one who has general overlordship and property rights to the land.

When someone in the family becomes sick the family witch doctor comes to chant in the person's very ear, in such loud and harsh tones that the sounds alone might be enough to bring about his death. If the patient gets worse [76] the witch doctor invites the participation of others of his profession and all the old women, in order to help him in his chanting; should the patient die no one other than the original witch doctor is held responsible. Once the sick person is completely prostrated, if she be a virgin and young, a tent of ponchos is made for her at some little distance from the camp. She is put into it and there the chanting becomes louder because

She is put into it and there the chanting becomes louder because

every available crone joins in and one of them attaches to a stick all the bells she can lay hold of and, making a great noise with them, she takes a turn around the outside of the tent every once in a while, those within redoubling their shouting when this occurs. During the time of the person's sickness mares and horses are slaughtered as an offering or sacrifice to the idol in order to bring about the sick one's recovery; but this offering is then eaten by the invalid and the chanters.

If the invalid should die, either in the new poncho tent if she is a virgin, or in the home tent if it be a man or a married woman, the favorite horse is brought to the tent, is saddled and harnessed, and all the dead person's valuables are placed on it. A boy is then mounted on the horse and made to ride once around the tent in which the corpse is lying. The boy is then taken off the horse and a noose is placed over the horse's neck from the two ends of which two Indians pull until the horse is choked to death. A bonfire being already prepared, the horse's trappings and valuables are hurled into it and the person who heads the funeral proceedings starts to take off all his clothes and all else he has on and hurls them into the fire, and all the deceased's relatives and friends throw some article of clothing into the flames, either a garment which they have brought for the purpose from their tents or else they take off a garment on the spot, each competing with the others as to the value of the articles thrown into the fire, by which they demonstrate greater obligation to the deceased, or deeper friendship, etc. Then they disembowel the throttled horse and the meat is distributed amongst all those who have thrown garments into the fire. The bereaved remains in her tent, completely covered up and silent. All the women relatives and friends go to keep them [sic] company, and in order to do this they cut big locks of hair from their heads so that their hair hangs down over their foreheads up to their eyebrows; they claw their faces, scarify their cheeks, weep even if they do not really feel like doing so, and indulge in wailing and other expressions of sorrow so pitiable and heart-rending that it seems that their very hearts would break. The old crones take over the body at night and bury it where it seems best to them, the whereabouts of the burial place being withheld from the mourners and from all others, and if the old women are asked to reveal the place where the body has been laid they are not allowed to do so. The mourning goes on for fifteen days, with the same moaning, and every day horses belonging to the deceased are slaughtered until not one is left, as all his goods are to be destroyed and cannot be given away to anyone, and nobody would receive them anyway knowing that their owner was dead because this is a sacred matter [77] for them, and inviolable.

[77] [i.e. any sick virgin.--Pawlyst]